

Unit III: The Future from The Past

Technology can be our best friend, and also be the biggest party pooper of our lives. It interrupts our ability to have a thought or a daydream, because we're too busy bridging the walk from the cafeteria back to the office on the call phone.

Steven Spielberg (1946 -)
Film director

FUTURE FORMS

English does not have a future tense as such. It has several forms which express different shades of meaning.

Match the names of the future forms in A with a sentence in B and their uses in C. Sometimes a form has more than one use.

A	B	C
A. Present Continuous	1. The lecture starts / will start at ten o'clock.	a. An arrangement between people.
B. Present Simple	2. I'm going to study engineering at university.	b. A planned intention
C. Will + Infinitive	3. I feel dizzy. I think I'm going to faint .	c. A spontaneous intention.
D. Going To Infinitive +	4. I'm meeting Tom for coffee.	d. A timetabled future fact.
E. Future Continuous	5. Will you be seeing Sally for lunch as usual?	e. A simple prediction.
F. Future Perfect	6. Don't call at 7.00 – I'll be getting ready to go out.	f. A prediction based on strong present evidence.
G. Future In The Past	7. I'll call tomorrow morning if you like.	g. An action which will be completed before a definite time.
	8. We were going to have a picnic, but it rained.	h. The future seen from a point in the past.
	9. They'll have decorated the whole house by May.	i. A future activity which will be in progress at a certain time.
	10. I know you'll enjoy the party.	j. An action that will happen in the normal course of events.

1. +...+....	2. +...+....	3. +...+....	4. +...+....	5. +...+....	6. +...+....	7. +...+....	8. +...+....	9. +...+....	10. +...+....
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Future in The Past

The past tense of the future forms is used to express the future seen from a point in the past.
 will/would is going to/was going to is arriving/was arriving is to/was to
 I **was going to attend** the meeting but it was cancelled.

Complete the second sentence in each pair.

1. I think their marriage will end in disaster.
I predicted their marriage _____ in disaster.
2. Bob is going to move to Australia if he gets the job in Sydney.
Bob _____ to Australia but he didn't get the job.
3. Ann's happy because she'll be seeing Tom tonight.
Ann smiled to herself; she _____ Tom in an hour.
4. The President is to make an announcement this evening.
The President _____ an announcement that evening, but it was cancelled.

Choose the correct ending to complete the sentences.

1. I was sure that the MRI scan....
would show that his heart was fine/ will have been cancelled.
2. I didn't call you with the news because...
we would meet later / we were meeting later.
3. Last time I saw Jim...
he was due to start a new job / he was leaving tomorrow.
4. There was to have been an investigation into the accident...
but it never took place / and it was the driver's fault.
5. He believed that one day his newborn son ...
would be running the business with him / was running the business with him.

Use the verb in brackets to complete the sentences in an appropriate form to express the future in the past.

1. His mum didn't worry when Jack went on holiday with all his mates. She knew he would behave (behave) sensibly.
2. The traffic warden _____ (give) me a ticket, but I persuaded him not to.
3. The lecture began badly. I hoped it_____ (get) better, but it just got worse and worse.
4. Hi! Last time I saw you, you _____ (emigrate) to Canada? Did you?
5. My brother's train _____ (arrive) at 18.05, but it was cancelled.
6. I _____ just _____ (complain) when our meal finally arrived.
7. Can you explain again how you did this on your computer? You _____ (show) me when we were rudely interrupted.
8. Becky! Oh dear! I forgot you _____ (come) to supper. I haven't got a thing to eat. Never mind. Come in.

READING

The text below is the beginning of a plenary session at the Future Worlds Conference in the US. The speakers talk about predictions for the future made by these people in the past.

- A. Bob Martin: An engineer in 1900
- B. Dr. Linda Grey: A feminist writer in 1929
- C. Eric Segal: Schoolchildren in 1968



Jack: Hello and welcome to this year's Future Worlds Society Conference and our first plenary discussion. I am jack Willet, your chairperson. Tonight, we are taking a break from discussing technological innovations and taking a step back in time to look at some people's predictions from long ago as to how we would be living today.

We are going to use three topics as a springboard for our discussion. We have three Future Worlds Society panellists who will each introduce a topic and answer questions.

So let me introduce first Eric Segal. Eric has a special interest in the phenomenon of the "time capsule"; next; Dr. Linda Grey, a lecturer in English Literature with a special interest in women's issues. And finally Bob Martin, an engineer, who is fascinated by the prediction of one particular engineer at the turn of the last century. Bob let's hear from you first.

Bob: Thank you, Jack. Well, I would just like to introduce the audience to the idea of civil engineer John Elfreth Watkins who wrote an article for – interestingly – the *Ladies' Home Journal*, at the beginning of the century, in 1900. It was quaintly called "what may happen in the next hundred years."

Jack: And was he accurate in his predictions?

Bob: Well, yes, extraordinarily so, in some cases. For example, he expected us to be taller by about 2 inches, around 5cms – which we are – have a much longer life expectancy – which we do – but he also expected everybody to walk at least 10 miles a day – which we certainly don't!

Jack: Well, I certainly don't...! What else?

Bob: He foresaw intensive year-round hot housing of vegetables and fruit, fresh food travelling round the planet in massive refrigerators, and ready-made meals off-the-shelf. All of these things happen now – but he foresaw them at a time when he couldn't possibly have had any inkling of them – when farming and cooking were still lengthy and labour-intensive processes. He appeared to welcome all of this, even saying we would have strawberries the size of apples! He was a bit over-hopeful about strawberries, obviously.

Jack: Ha. What about other technology?

Bob: Watkins was even more accurate here, predicting wireless phone calls, digital photographs and live TV pictures travelling instantly across the globe – well before the first international phone call was made. He also predicted central heating and air conditioning, when people still generally had coal fires and electricity was in its infancy.

Jack: So Watkins' overall view of our lives was a good one?

Bob: Oh, yes, awesome! He envisaged car-free city centres, cheap public transport with most people living outside the city; and free university education for all. And this was the main aim of the 1950s and 60s with its open urban planning, and house building in the suburbs. But we've actually moved past that model for living now. People are moving back into cities as the price of transport goes up. And sadly, free universities are not around, in the USA at least.

Jack: Thank you, Bob. Now, Linda, you are going to introduce someone else with clear ideas on the future – with particular regard to women, is that right?

Linda: Yes. I specialize in women writers, and I recently came across a little-known author who wrote a similar article to Watkins but from a women's perspective.

Jack: Who was she?

Linda: She was Josephine Daskam Bacon, born in Connecticut in 1876. She wrote adventure stories in which, unusually for the time, women took lead roles. But in 1929 she took a break from writing fiction to publish an article called 'in 1979' where she imagines women's lives fifty years into the future.

Jack: And what does she say?

Linda: Well she said that her granddaughters would be able to "have it all" and that technology would aid them to do so. As with most feminists at the beginning of the 20th century, she believed that technology would continue to free women from their traditionally restricted roles in society. Many feminists fervently hoped for the invention of a 'meal-in-a-pill', and that it would provide a passport out of the kitchen for women. Already, young women who were growing up in the 1920s were used to huge technological developments and embraced them in a way that their mothers hadn't. Women of the previous generation feared technology and couldn't see the necessity of dangerous things like cars and electricity. But – for example, in the 20s, the new medium of radio was developing and young women rapidly took to it, much to the dismay of the male population who saw technology as exclusively theirs.

Jack: So how did Bacon see her granddaughter's lives? Happier?

Linda: Yes, much happier. Bacon quite rightly saw labour-saving gadgets and technology supporting a much freer society, where women could have a job, as well as children and a husband. And be free to choose whether she wanted both or just the ob, or just the family. Which, of course, is what we have today. She also envisaged women flying to their jobs in little planes – which hasn't happened yet, unfortunately!

Jack: And finally, let's have a quick word from Eric about time capsules and some children's views on the future.

Eric: Thanks, Jack. Well, we have some wonderful ideas from children in 1968 predicting life in 2068. Primary school in Pennsylvania was closing down, so the school's time capsule was recently located and dug up. They decided to open the capsule and children work from nearly 50 years ago came to light.

Jack: And did they show?

Eric: Brilliantly cute and cheerful drawings of people travelling to the moon to live – or just for picnics! – And this was obviously before the first person stepped on the moon. There were also houses in big bubbles under the sea for people to live in. And the car of the future had no wheels and looked like a hovercraft travelling at speed along elevated highways. Great stuff! And as these were predictions for 2068, who's to say these children won't be correct? We already have space tourism. And I am personally looking forward to my first hover car!

Jack: So am I! Now ladies and gentlemen – you have heard some predictions for the future from the past. What are your thoughts on those that have happened and those that haven't yet? Will they happen? Secondly, it seems to me that these past views of our future were primarily optimistic and hopeful – two things that I feel we may have lost a bit of today? Do you agree?

Read the text and write (A, B or C) to say who said that in the future we would...?

1. Be able to fly to work _____
2. Fly to the moon for a picnic _____
3. Have fresh fruit and vegetables all year round _____
4. Swallow a pill instead of a meal _____
5. Have no cars in city centres _____
6. Spend less time on cooking and housework _____
7. Live in underwater bubble homes _____
8. Grow giant strawberries _____
9. Send digital photos wirelessly worldwide _____
10. All walk about ten miles a day _____
11. Be travelling in hover cars in 2068 _____



Read the text again. Mark the sentences true (✓) or false (✗). Correct the false ones.

John Elfreth Watkins...



1. Accurately predicted the changes in human lifespan and growth patterns.

2. Believed that we would all have huge refrigerators in our homes.

3. Thought that higher education would be free to everybody.

4. Believed that more and more people would move to the cities.

Josephine Daskam Bacon...



1. Was a science fiction author, who wrote novels about women's lives in 50 years' time.

2. Believed her granddaughters would be able to cope with both jobs and running the home.

3. Doubted that technology would make future women happier with their lot.

The Pennsylvanian schoolchildren...



1. Buried a time capsule which was dug up prematurely.

2. Wrote stories about living on the moon.

3. Predicted space tourism.

These lines are very similar to those in the text. Read the text again and replace the words in *italics* with the words used in the discussion.

1. We are taking a break from discussing technological *advances*.

2. We are going to use three topics as a *launch* _____ to our discussion.
3. The article was *charmingly* _____ called "what may happen in the next hundred years."
4. He couldn't possibly have had an *idea* _____ of them.
5. I recently came across a *minor* _____ author who wrote a similar article.
6. Many feminists *passionately* _____ hoped for the invention of a 'meal-in-a-pill'.
7. Young women quickly started to *like* _____ the radio, much to the *disappointment* _____ of the male population.
8. She also *foresaw* _____ women flying to their jobs in little planes.

WRITING

DESCRIBING AND EVALUATING

- 1 People often read online reviews of the products they are about to buy. Have you read any? Were they helpful? Have you ever written one? Why?
- 2 Look quickly through the three reviews for the Galaxy Gear watch. Which are positive? Which negative? Pick out one key phrase from each which illustrates the writer's opinion.
- 3 Read **Reviews 1** and **2**. What is the one thing they agree on? How do they express this?
- 4 These phrases are all taken from **Review 3**. Are they **positive** or **negative**? Write + or - beside each one.

I wish Samsung had opted for –
I'm pleasantly surprised +
isn't to my taste
an intriguing bit of kit
better than expected
feels like a gimmick
sleek and elegant
with a fair bit of potential
gorgeous premium feel
basic yet intuitive at the same time
stands out like a sore thumb
these gestures are welcome
to be honest, the camera is OK
adds bulk to the device
I would have preferred
I really wanted to love the Gear

- 5 Read **Review 3** again. The writer calls it 'OK but not quite there yet'. In what ways is the product 'not quite there'? In what ways does it excel?
- 6 Choose a gadget or a product that you know and write an online review of it. Use phrases from exercise 4. Compare your reviews.

SAMSUNG GALAXY GEAR wearable computer watch

REVIEW 1 ★★★★☆ 4 out of 5 stars By **Markster** 15 Dec

An awesome piece of tech

The whole concept of making a phone call from your watch has been around for some years. For me personally, this watch is perfect. The screen is clear and the ringtones are plenty loud enough. The camera is quite good for a 1.9 megapixel. Simple to use, and clear icons. Looks premium with brushed aluminium, and the strap is OK. Nice colour collection.

I suppose if I have to find negatives, it would be:

- 1 Not waterproof.
- 2 Not that many apps available, but what is, seems fine.
- 3 Not being able to make calls without being linked to smartphone.

REVIEW 2 ★★★★★ 1 out of 5 stars By **Nirbhik** 22 Dec

Overrated, overpriced ... few features

Unless you are one of those obsessed gadget geeks who don't know the difference between appearance and reality, it wouldn't take much effort to realize what an overrated, overpriced smart watch this really is. The annoying thing about this – lack of apps. So I had no other choice but to sell mine.

REVIEW 3 ★★★★☆ 3 out of 5 stars By **Shaun Dowdall** 11 Jan

OK but not quite there yet

Introduction The Samsung Galaxy Gear is an intriguing bit of kit and perhaps one of the smartest wearables out there. With competition hotting up and wearables fighting to become relevant in the marketplace, how does the Gear hold up?

Look and Feel To start with, it's a lovely-looking device. It's sleek and elegant, with a gorgeous premium feel to it. However, the strap isn't to my taste – the clasp on the bottom is too large. I constantly found myself getting caught against desk edges or on keyboards.

User Interface It's pretty basic yet intuitive at the same time. Swipe to the left to show notifications or continue scrolling for other apps. You can also set quick gestures, for example, swipe up and your phone dialler will pop up. These gestures are welcome when it comes to such a tiny screen.

Sound quality needs a mention. It's good, very good in fact. During a call, I could hear everything clearly even when I was in a relatively noisy area. I didn't expect this and must admit I'm pleasantly surprised.

Camera I would have preferred a front-facing camera, but Samsung opted to give us a spy camera shooter. To be honest, the camera is OK – it's not good and it's not bad. The major issue I have with the camera is that it's relatively large and adds bulk to the device. It also stands out like a sore thumb, with many people asking why I have a camera on my watch.

Battery I've heard some horror stories about the Gear's battery, but I managed a solid two days on my Gear between charges. It's not fantastic, but it's better than expected.

Conclusion I really wanted to love the Gear, but I just can't bring myself to fall for it completely. It's gorgeous and well-built, but it feels like a gimmick at the moment, with a fair bit of potential. In my opinion, it just isn't yet ready for prime time, and my recommendation would be to wait for the second generation of the Gear.

